

These individuals—and countless others—are real examples of the early contributions of African Americans in Colorado and throughout the American West. Yet I do not speak of these individuals so their stories remain in history books or museums, but instead to highlight the continuing efforts and contributions of Colorado's Black community to our State. From the time that James Beckwourth and "Aunt" Clara Brown made their way to Colorado along with other Black men, women and children until present day, there have been many other community leaders, public officials, and entrepreneurs who have overcome the struggles of progress. They rose above the challenges of frontier life and those hard times of the great depression. They joined many others to mine Colorado's mineral wealth and forge the steel of Colorado's railways to contribute to Colorado's burgeoning economy. They have fought in every major American war to protect a collective freedom that for so many years they were denied. And they have risen in solidarity to defend the civil rights of every American citizen regardless of the color of their skin.

Today, I am proud to see Colorado's African-American community continue as a vibrant force in our State, just as they can be found in our history.

As I marched recently in Denver's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. "marade," I was reminded of Dr. King's dream of a nation where people are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. We have made much progress in working to fulfill Dr. King's dream; and it was evident to me, that his message is still being heard.

Mr. President, I hope all Coloradans and Americans can reflect on the contributions of African Americans of our State and throughout our great Nation not only during the Black History Month but in every month of the year.

RECOGNIZING THE CUTTER OAK CREW

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the crewmembers of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Oak*, a 225-foot sea-going Buoy Tender homeported in Charleston, SC, for their bravery, stamina, and fortitude in their response to the tragic aftermath of the earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

One day after the earthquake, with just a few hours' notice, the *Oak's* crewmembers departed from Charleston stocked with medical supplies, food provisions, and 62,880 bottles of water. Their engineers and food service specialists worked around the clock to ensure the ship had all the supplies they needed for the humanitarian rescue mission, and on January 18, 2010, the Coast Guard Cutter *Oak* arrived in Haiti.

The crew faced a tremendous challenge both physically and mentally as

they sought to open the port in Port-au-Prince and provide humanitarian assistance and evacuation for the critically injured. Working under the joint task force and partnering with the Haitian port officials and maritime community, the *Oak's* crew surveyed the port and placed out buoys to improve the conditions. Having spent time in Haiti on previous missions training the Haitian Coast Guard members in CPR and first aid, small arms maintenance, and boat maintenance, the *Oak's* crewmembers were able to quickly improve the situation. I am especially proud of the crew's accomplishment in reopening the port to traffic on January 21, 2010. Because of their efforts, life-saving relief aid reached the Haitian people.

In addition to opening the port, the *Oak's* crew distributed food, water, and medical supplies and aided in evacuating hundreds of American citizens and critically injured Haitians to the United States. Their quick response to a terrifying situation saved the lives of many people, and these impressive achievements bring great credit upon the *Oak*.

It is with great pride that I thank Commander Mike Glander, the commanding officer of the *Oak*, and the men and women under his command.

These crewmembers have upheld the best traditions of the Coast Guard and have represented the city of Charleston, the State of South Carolina, and this Nation with honor and distinction. They have worked diligently to support the values that make this Nation great. I know the Coast Guard is especially proud of the heroic actions of the *Oak's* crewmembers, but on behalf of the people of the State of South Carolina and our great country, I salute the outstanding work of the crewmembers of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Oak*. This January, the men and women of the *Oak* were a living expression to the world of the *Oak's* motto—Decora Fides Robur—Honor, Faithfulness, Strength.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011—PM 43

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message

from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975 as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on the Budget; and Appropriations:

To the Congress of the United States:

We begin a new year at a moment of continuing challenge for the American people. Even as we recover from crisis, millions of families are still feeling the pain of lost jobs and savings. Businesses are still struggling to find affordable loans to expand and hire workers. Our Nation is still experiencing the consequences of a deep and lasting recession, even as we have seen encouraging signs that the turmoil of the past 2 years is waning. Moving from recession to recovery, and ultimately to prosperity, remains at the heart of my Administration's efforts. This Budget provides a blueprint for the work ahead.

But in order to understand where we are going in the coming year, it is important to remember where we started just 1 year ago. Last January, the United States faced an economic crisis unlike any we had known in generations. Irresponsible risk-taking and debt-fueled speculation—unchecked by sound oversight—led to the near-collapse of our financial system. Our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was falling at the fastest rate in a quarter-century. Five trillion dollars of Americans' household wealth had evaporated in just 12 weeks as stocks, pensions, and home values plummeted. We were losing an average of 700,000 jobs each month, equivalent to the population of the State of Vermont. The capital and credit markets, integral to the normal functioning of our economy, were virtually frozen. The fear among economists—from across the political spectrum—was that we risked sinking into a second Great Depression.

Immediately, we undertook a series of difficult steps to prevent that outcome. We acted to get lending flowing again so that businesses could get loans to buy equipment and ordinary Americans could get financing to buy homes and cars, go to college, and start or run businesses. We enacted measures to foster greater stability in the housing market, help responsible homeowners stay in their homes, and help to stop the broader decline in home values. To achieve this, and to prevent an economic collapse that would have affected millions of additional families, we had no choice but to use authority enacted under the previous Administration to extend assistance to some of the very banks and financial institutions whose actions had helped precipitate the turmoil. We also took steps to prevent the rapid dissolution of the American auto industry—which faced a crisis partly of its own making—to prevent the loss of hundreds of thousands of additional jobs during an already fragile time. Many of these decisions were not popular, but we deemed them